

Tunnel Beach

The tunnel beach area would have been covered with bush and looked quite different to the place it does today. There is plenty of evidence that the Otago area was dense with bush.

According to our people (Māori), when European arrived, they would sometimes venture into the thick bush in the Dunedin area and get lost and never come out. Māori had trails and tracks and understood the area.

Monro made his observations about the mouth of the Ōtākou harbour in 1844:

The sky, a great part of the time, was without a cloud, and not a breeze ruffled the surface of the water, which reflected the surrounding wooded slopes, and every sea-bird that floated upon it, with mirror-like accuracy. For some hours after sunrise, the woods resounded with the rich and infinitely varied notes of thousands of tuis and other songsters. I never heard anything like it before in any part of New Zealand.¹

Monro followed on to note the “absence of a good site for a town”(Dunedin). He mentioned how inhospitable the bush was on the mainland and that whalers had said they never ventured into it.

On his stay at Ōtākou (the Otago Harbour and village at the end of the peninsula) between 1843 and 1844, Edward Shortland wrote in his diary:

In the morning I woke early; and, as the dawn first peeped forth, was deafened by the sound of bell birds. The woods which were close by seemed to be thronged with them. Never before had I heard so loud a chorus. I called to mind Captain Cook’s description of the impression made on him by the singing of these birds, when at anchor near the shore in Queens Charlotte’s Sound. He is wrong, however, in saying that they sing at night, like the nightingale. They commence at dawn of day their chime of four notes, which, repeated independently by a thousand throats, creates the strangest melody. But they cease, as by one consent, the moment the suns first rays are visible; and

¹ D. Monro, “Notes of a Journey through a Part of the Middle Island of New Zealand,” 96.

there is a general silence. Again, at even, they commence, just as the sun's last ray fades, and sing on till dark.²

Food gathering and pathways

By winter most groups of Māori had returned to their main settlements, but some went inland to the central Otago area on expeditions to get weka. Anderson discusses the coastal and foothills in the forest along the coast and Māori would track these. Traditional evidence also tells of a system of tracks extending the length of the east coast” (Anderson p 44, When all the Moa ovens grew cold.) These pathways were important for Māori up and down the coast. Māori were also controlling these pathways as important trading routes.

Tui, pigeon and kaka were taken mainly in August and there were many other fowl and various kai that were taken, “Food preservation and resource exchange were prominent features of the economy” (Anderson p 44, When all the Moa ovens grew cold)

Titi(sooty shearwater) and other various birds would be nesting along the coast. A DOC study in 1993 by Sheryl Hamilton revealed that there were many titi burrows along the Otago coastline including that at Green Island and Moturata and other various spots near Tunnel Beach. It wasn't obvious in some areas whether they were titi or blue penguin burrows. The breeding season begins in late September/early October when adults return to breeding colonies for courtship and burrow preparation. Burrows can be up to three meters long and end in a large nesting chamber. Egg laying occurs in late November, early December and hatching in late January. A fledgling titi hatches in April until mid-May and chicks come to the surface after-dark for a few days before leaving. Although there was proof of nesting pairs of titi and egg produce on these Otago coastal sites they were also predated on. Mortality of these birds was appeared to be from cats and mustelids.

Kāi Tahu have a longstanding and deep knowledge of birdlife and cycles and particularly that of the tītī. They have been harvested and eaten for 100s of years by Kāi Tahu and whanau continue to do so today.

² Edward Shortland, *The Southern Districts of New Zealand*, 121-122.

Rakiihia

There is one key figure who according to iwi history was Rakiihia, who was buried at what is known as Lookout Point in Dunedin. Rakiihia of Kāti Mamoe (the grandson of Tūtemākohu of the senior Kāti Mamoe line). Rakiihia entered into negotiations at Kaiapoi with Te Hautapunui-o-tū (Senior Kāi Tahu chief. The negotiation was successful, and marriages were arranged as a part of this process. The truce is remembered in the name Poupoutunoa, which is the name of a hill near Clinton. Rakiihia stayed on at Kaiapoi for some time and eventually returned south (Ōtākou) with Te Hau Tapunuiotū to find that his sister was being treated badly by her 'household slaves.'³ Rakiihia killed the slaves and was wounded in the process. Rakiihia died a prolonged death as recorded in a Māori language manuscript.⁴ The manuscript stated,

Ko te wāhi e noho nei te ope nei he rae kei te taha hauauru o te awa o te wahapū o Ōtākou e rere atu ana te raina rerewe o Kōpūtai ki Otepoti. Ka tae ki te rae ka kitea atu te taone Otepoti. Koia te wāhi i noho ai taua ope. I muri mai i tā rāua whawhai ko tōna hoariri, ka rewa te ope nei. Noho rawa atu i reira i te matenga o Rakiihia. Ka tanumia ki tētahi wāhi kei roto i te taone o Otepoti. Ko Urunga-te-Raki te ingoa.

Translation:

The group resided at the head of the eastern side of the river at the entrance of Ōtākou, the train track runs from Port Chalmers to Dunedin. Dunedin city can be seen when you arrive at the point. This is where the group resided. Following the fight, the group left. They stayed until Rakiihia's passing. He was buried in a place in Dunedin city. Urunga-te-Raki is the name of that place.

Placenames

Uruka te Raki

³ Athol Anderson, *Welcome of Strangers*, 52.

⁴ Private Hoani Maaka Manuscript.

The meaning of this is associated with a Kāti Māmoe ancestor, Rakiihia. It is the name for the Hillside area.

Te Raka-a-ruka-te-raki

The place where Te Rakiihia (a tupuna) was buried – a ridge up above St Clair, near Corstorphine.

Kurumahaka or Karumahaka

This place name is possibly a written mistake and is more likely to be “Karumahaka.” A Karu Mahaka (Kāi Tahu dialect) is a snare with a number of nooses beside the water to catch ducks and other large birdlife. These were also known as waka kereru elsewhere, a traditional Māori trap with a water trough set with a noose to snare the birds.

Tikao to Beattie in Tikao Talks; “The kaha was a snare with a number of nooses (Karu-mahanga), and was set beside water to catch several kinds of birds. You could also put nooses in trees, or you could build a tutu (stage) up a tree and catch birds one by one with a tuke snare set on a pole and a tame decoy to lure the wild birds.” (Pg 134)

Beattie discusses the *kaha* as a snare with a number of nooses (karu-mahanga) set beside the water to catch several kinds of birds. Images of wood pigeon(kukupu) traps below:





Whakahekerāu

Name for Saint Clair beach

Pounui-a-Hine

White Island off St Clair. During the 1879 Smith-Nairn commission of inquiry into the Ngai Tahu land claims, Ngāi Tahu kaumātua recorded Pounui-a-Hine as an island that was not sold to the Crown

Taiari

The Taiari River, meanders down through the plains, the zig zag nature of its twists and turns is reputed to be the result of the taniwha Matamata wriggling around looking for its lost master the Kāti Māmoe chief Te Rakitauneke as previously discussed.

The wider Taiari area is a critical food gathering resource with the coastal area, inland waterways and surrounding hills providing an abundance and variety of kai (food)

Moturata

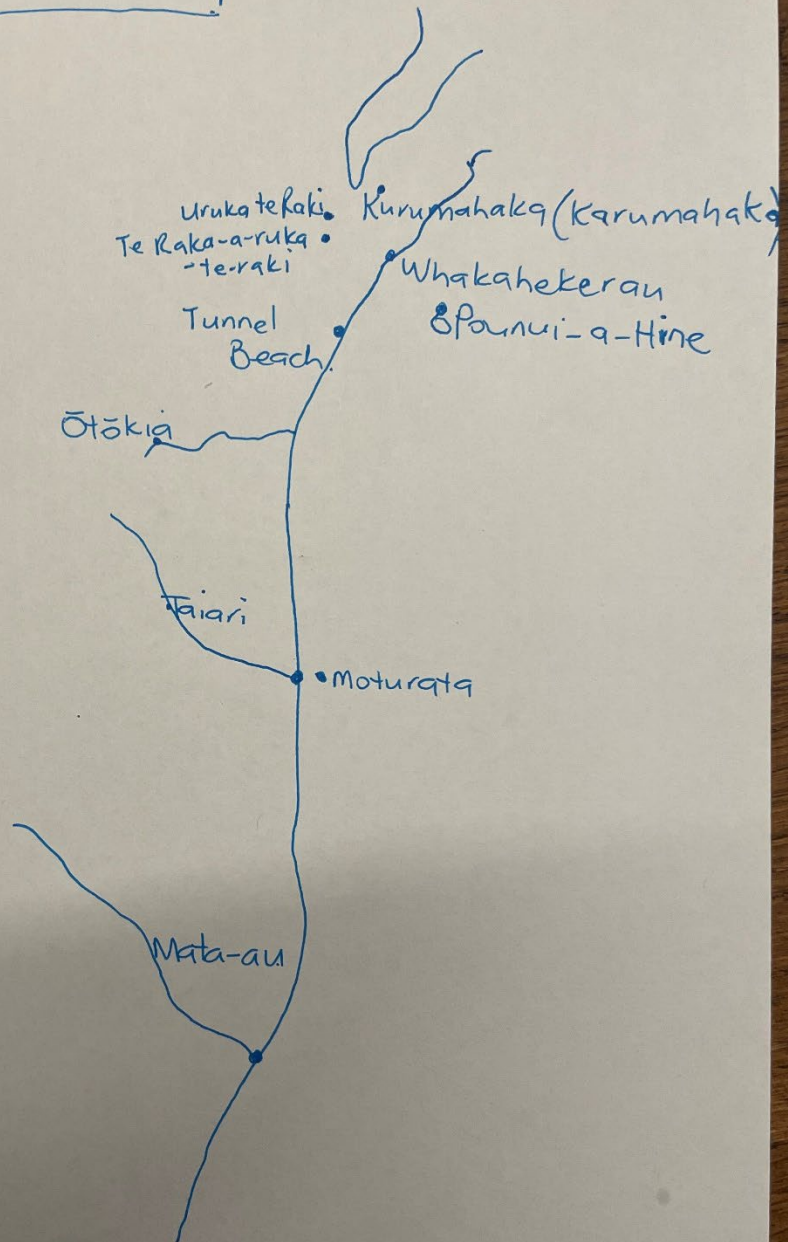
This is the traditional Māori name for Taiari Island near the Taiari River Mouth

Mata-au

Mata-au is the Clutha River that flows from Lake Wānaka in a south-easterly direction through Central Otago into the Pacific Ocean at Molyneux Bay. Māori travelled down the coastline and the Mata-au river was used as a travelling riverway out to sea from inland Otago. Goods were transported such as various kai (food) and pounamu (greenstone)

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Potential Map



Trails and movement

Kāi Tahu were a nomadic people who travelled extensively on land, waterways and sea. They travelled from areas like that of the Otago Peninsula and inland. Māori would drag their waka into estuaries and walk by foot to food-gathering places such as the Taiari (now known as Taieri), which was rich in food sources like birds and eels.

Māori also followed tracks inland to central Otago, walking and using waka like mokihi (canoe made out of raupō). Edward Shortland suggests that the ancient walking tracks were falling into disuse by the time he explored the Otago area because of the superior marine technology that Māori had employed over the previous 40 years.⁵ The whaling boat proved to be an improved mode of transport from the carved single or double-hulled Māori vessels that dominated sea transport until the arrival of the European. Atholl Anderson's important work on Kāi Tahu history is referred to here and he also researched and wrote about the interior area (Central Otago) and occupation of that area by our people. Some of these important pathways included routeway via water or by land; along both sides of Lake Te Anau, Lake Wakatipu, Dart River, along Mataura River, Nevis River, Clutha River and the Taiari.

⁵ Edward Shortland, *The Southern Districts of New Zealand*.